

A CONVENIENT COLLECTING CONTAINER FOR BUTTERFLIES.

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Various ways are in vogue for handling and caring for freshly caught butterflies while in the field. Some collectors use pretty clumsy methods, such as stuffing extra cyanide bottles full or patiently laying each catch in little pill boxes after killing or tediously pinning every newly caught individual in a voluminous container which is difficult to keep in contact with if there is fast netting over a wide area. Probably the prevalent fashion throughout Eastern United States at the present time is to carry one pocket full of empty envelopes and have the other ready to cram full of filled ones. All these methods seem to me to be rather hard on the collector and equally hard on his specimens, in addition to taking up much time which could otherwise be employed in search, etc. So, it is the object of this paper to explain a simple, inexpensive and very satisfactory scheme which has been in use for sometime on the Pacific Coast.

About ten years ago Mr. Hal Newcomb, of Los Angeles, conceived the idea of hanging an empty Baker's Cocoa tin on his belt as a receptacle for butterfly specimens while collecting. The bottom of the tin was filled with cyanide (see illustration) and the rest with one, long, narrow, folded-back-and-forth, strip of paper. The secret of success lay in the fact that the folds kept the newly caught specimens in perfect shape (wings folded correctly), while they were being killed by the fumes and also afterwards. As many as 100 specimens could be kept in the tin and put in one at a time and there was never any rubbing; in other words, a day's catch in the field could be kept this way and later sorted out upon returning home. The lid of the tin, being hinged on the outer side, allowed the container to be opened and closed at will with one hand which added to its convenience and also kept the cyanide weak enough to prevent discoloration of specimens. To save rusting the outside of the tin was painted black. A pair of Denton forceps hung on a string around the neck was found to be a necessary adjunct to this method of collecting. Being hung there, they could not get lost and were in immediate reach to transfer the living butterflies directly from the net to the tin. This little tin box hung on your belt is a splendid idea and will keep your specimens in good shape until papered or mounted.